

10
VARSITY.
October 10th, 1931.

THE NEW VICTORIA CINEMA.

THE Victoria Cinema has once again thrown open its doors to the populace and undergraduates of Cambridge, after two years of inactivity. During that period the old cinema, rightly named of Clara Bow fame, has been completely demolished, and in its place there has been erected the new and modern house that now graces the Market Square.

Only a few fourth year men and B.A.'s can remember the Vic. as it originally stood, for it closed down in April of 1929, and re-opened in its present form in the last week of August, a fitting contribution to the many entertainment palaces which abound in Cambridge.

The building is more than a cinema as it incorporates a large bar and lounge, a commodious foyer, and hall planned as a restaurant, but not yet complete, and probably to be converted into a dance floor. It has taken over two years to build, and has been erected at a cost of almost £100,000.

The cinema itself has been built on essentially modern lines, and on the plan of similar institutions in the West End. It seats 1,500 people, having floor accommodation for 1,000 persons and a balcony containing an additional 500 seats. The front seats are built in a slight circle, so as to give a perfect view of the screen from all angles.

A spacious orchestra pit is incorporated, and full provision has been made for the housing of a band, should the orchestra return to favour in cinema performances. The stage is hidden by a richly ornamented curtain, which, operated from the projection box, opens to reveal the screen.

The decoration and general design is vivid and original. The predominating colour is red.



The Auditorium as seen from the Screen.

The organ is on a lift which raises the console out of the orchestra pit on to a level with the stage. Ten minutes of music from this instrument is incorporated in every programme.

The sound equipment has been fitted by Western Electric, whose machines are still in the forefront of all talkie sets. The usual equipment has been installed, the sound being controlled from the projection box behind the balcony. This apparatus and the general lighting of the theatre is done on the town electrical supply, but a six cylinder 60 h.p. motor has been incorporated so as to guarantee the more vital lighting and enable the programme to continue in the event of emergency or breakdown.

The management of the Victoria Cinema have adopted the same policy as that of other Cambridge halls. A two hour programme is given, and variety is not to be included in the performance. One feature film and a supporting programme of news reels, comedies and cartoons are to comprise the bill. It is, however, augmented by a short organ interlude.

The general entrance is from Market Square, and the pay box windows are on either side of the passage leading into the foyer, from which one passes into the cinema itself. This foyer is capable of holding five hundred or more people, and saves queuing in the road. There is in addition a spacious crush hall under the balcony.

A commodious and convenient lounge and bar is situated under the cinema, where alcohol refreshment can be obtained in comfort, subject to the usual licensing restrictions.

Comparative Table of Cambridge Cinemas.

	Victoria.	Central.	Tivoli.	Playhouse.
Seats	1500	2,200	995	200
Stalls	1,000	1,750	440	100
Balcony	500	450	555	100
Sound Equipment	Western Electric	Western Electric	British Acoustic	British Acoustic

Cambridge CINEMA Chronicle, by Mike Petty

c.76.9 : cinema

note: for Cambridge-made films see c. 65.6

source

M = C.S. Manning "The Cinematograph & animated pictures: Cambridge 1896-1909 In : Cambridgeshire Local History Council Bulletin no.39, 1984

Early moving pictures – 33 07 29

Arthur Melbourne-Cooper was the builder of St Alban's first cinema, a photographer and film-maker who was also a stunt man and acting coach. Having trained in his father's photographic business he became cameraman to Birt Acres, a scientist who in 1892 was experimenting with 'moving projection figures'. Arthur made short films which were presented by the showmen who travelled Hertfordshire showgrounds then set up a company and filmed extensively. Spectators often tried to disrupt proceedings and a crowd of undergraduates attacked his cast and camera crew when filming in Cambridge. He retired to Little Shelford 61 08 08 & a

British Association meeting at Cambridge 1833 first moving pictures demonstrated, 'Phantasmascope' – 38 08 13a

1896

First film shown in Cambridge at Tudors Circus, Auckland Road [M]

Please make what use of this you may. Kindly remember where it came from – www.mikepetty.org.uk

1896

Films shown in Guildhall (used intermittently till c1924) [M]

1899

First films shown for The Navy League, Corn Exchange [M]

1899 06 30

The East Coast Mutoscope Company has been formed to popularise that entertaining piece of mechanism which is known as the mutoscope, a portable instrument for the production of animated pictures. The intention is to set up these machines throughout the region so that by dropping a penny in the slot one may experience all the pleasure of witnessing a cinematograph exhibition. The promoters have good grounds for their confidence that the mutoscope will return handsome profits

1899 06 30

1900

1902 10 14

The New Edisonograph Animated Pictures were presented for the first time in Cambridge. They are by far the best yet seen, being considerably larger than usual and without any flicker. The Coronation pictures are exceptionally clear and very vivid are the pictures of the Prince and Princess of Wales visiting the dinners to the poor in London. For those sentimentally inclined nothing can be finer than the "Soldier's Return from the War" – to find the house to let and his mother in the Workhouse. The band of the University Volunteers is engaged and add much to the evening by their appropriate music. The pictures will be changed nightly and animated scenes of Cambridge streets will be presented. 02 10 14

1902 11 10

Notice to Entertainment Providers. Messrs Coulson & Co of St Andrew's Street Cambridge have purchased one of the latest Cinematograph Machines that it is possible to get. This machine is capable of showing 2,000 feet of pictures without any breakages. Pictures shown are very bright and steady and any size up to 20 feet may be obtained. It can be used either in dining room or public hall with equal safety. Sleight of hand and other items of entertainment can also be supplied. 02 11 10

1903 03 17

One of the best cinematographic entertainments ever seen in Cambridge is running at the Guildhall. The North American Animated Photo. Co. are showing some of the most interesting sights it is possible to conceive. Mr Joseph Chamberlain landed at Southampton on Saturday and on Monday a series of pictures were showing the Cambridge folk his reception. The operator was busy at work on Fenner's on Saturday where the Cambridge athletes achieved a sweeping victory. Music adds to the attraction. The entertainment will be repeated twice a day. 03 03 17

1904 06 24

The Midsummer Fair brought its usual amusements but the cinematograph held undisputed sway: it is the autocrat which swallows hundreds of 'tuppences' and is always ready for more. It was patronised liberally and showed some very excellent representations of national and local life. War pictures form no inconsiderable part of the programme and among the turns of local interest were views of the May Races and the boiler explosion at Linton. CDN 24.6.1904

1904 12 23

Dr Seaton's Animated Photographs and Concert Company visited Cambridge Guildhall on Boxing Day. The pictures include the latest Japanese and Russian war films, "Life in Canada" a grand film of 1,200 feet long, "The Kingdom of the Fairies" and a large variety of humorous subjects well worth witnessing. The performance included a high-class variety entertainment including Professor Carson, ventriloquist and mimic and Dr Seaton with his conjuring and plate-spinning. CDN 23.12.1904

1906 06 23

An alarm of fire was raised at one of the cinematograph shows at Midsummer Fair. A film and various odds and ends near the operating box became ignited and flames shot up above the front staging. Some alarm was shown by the audience who were assured there was not the slightest danger but all the exits were opened and those who wished were enabled to leave without difficulty. The flames were quickly extinguished and the entertainment proceeded as usual. 06 06 23a & b

1908

Alexandra Hall (YMCA lecture hall) used for first regular film shows, (stopped 1914) [M]

1908 03 17

Last September a cinematograph entertainment was given by the Gaumont Company at Newmarket. The operator jarred the machine and a piece of hot lime ignited one of the films. In trying to extinguish the flames he knocked over the lantern, the cylinder of gas ignited and there was a rush for the door. One lady was thrown into the flames and so terribly injured that she died in hospital. The company had paid her funeral expenses. Now her husband demanded damages: she had earned 10s a week at the laundry and his prospects of work were much reduced since a married man had a better chance of a respectable position than an unmarried one. 08 03 17

1908 10 09

Poole's Myriorama is a unique entertainment comprising views of the lands beyond the seas. A special feature is 'A contest in the clouds' in which the aerial warfare of the future is strikingly forecasted by a remarkably clever series of pictures and effects and some splendid pictures were shown on the Bioscope. A capable company of entertainers include a troupe of Japanese performers whose feat of walking a rope from one end of Cambridge Guildhall almost to the ceiling is really marvellous CWN 08 10 09 p6

1909

Picture Palace opened in Working Men's Club (regular film shows till c1916) [M]

1909 09 17

The danger of fire at cinematographic exhibitions, such as that at Newmarket a couple of years ago which caused fatal panic, has now been eliminated. A demonstration of the new Mansell cinematographic machines was given at Cambridge Guildhall. The lantern is guaranteed fireproof and enclosed in an iron operating house. Even under circumstances of the grossest carelessness, which no operator would ever risk, all that would happen is that just two inches of film would be fired. 09 09 17

1910

1910

Cinematograph shows attract crowds at Midsummer Fair [3.2]

1910 04 29

Frederick Hawkins, proprietor of the Picture Palace, Workman's Hall, Fitzroy Street appeared in court under the Gaming Act. He had distributed numbered handbills and given half-a-crown to the person whose number he showed on screen. On Saturday night there were other prizes of a silver-plated teapot, silver-plated cruet and six teaspoons in a case. Hawkins said he'd done it to test if advertising by handbills was any good. But it was a breach of the law and he was given a nominal fine. 10 04 29a

1910 08 19

Henry and William Thurston, roundabout proprietors, were summoned for not having a supply of proper appliances at a cinematograph exhibition. Supt Lander said there were between 3,000 and 4,000 people at Histon Show. Messrs Thurston had a show there, which he visited. The machine was enclosed but the fire buckets were outside the tent, telescoped. Thurston's manager said they had

hardly had time to put the fire appliances in the tent before the first show. It was a serious case and the public must be protected. They were fined £10 10 08 19a

1910 08 19

The Sturton Town Hall Company applied for cinematograph, music and dancing licences. At present the premises were used by the Salvation Army on Sundays and occasional week days but in future it would be used for entertainment, the chief part of which would be moving pictures. The cinematograph apparatus might be placed outside the hall by erecting a platform and making a hole in the wall, though the club billiard room made this impracticable, or the vestibule might be taken away and a platform erected there. 10 08 19f

1910 09 18

Demonstration of cinematograph machine at Guildhall for Corporation, “time coming when every town will have a hall especially constructed for viewing”; great precautions taken against fire [3.1]

1910 11 11

The People’ bioscope car arrived at the Three Horse Shoes Inn, Harston, on Monday evening and gave an excellent exhibition of pictures with gramophone selections. There was a large attendance & the military scenes especially aroused the enthusiasm of the local Territorials and Harston Boy Scouts. Those who cared to do so were, by the courtesy of the manager of the car, enabled to listen to further gramophone selections until closing hour when hearty cheers were given for ‘The People’ car. 10 11 11f

1910 12 03

Bioscope show at Hippodrome, projector rented from London firm fails to work properly, court case – The Times 10 12 03

1911 07 28

A slight outbreak of fire occurred at the Picture Palace, East Road. The heat during the day had been intense and the lantern operator, Harry Pink, became a little faint and accidentally knocked a small piece of film on to the lantern, the heat igniting it. The film flared up and Pink quickly turned off the light, pulled down the safety shutters of the box, which is a fire-proof structure, and jumped out. The film soon burnt out and the audience, consisting of 37 children and three adults, walked out without any panic 11 07 28d

1911 08 11

The Cambridge Electric Theatre Company applied for a cinematograph licence to show inflammable films at the Victoria Assembly Rooms on Market Hill. Only non-inflammable films are currently used but these do not give as clear a picture. The lantern chamber was situated outside the building and was fire-proof with iron shutters to block the two openings in the wall. The hall could seat 280 and be cleared in less than two minutes. But there was no back exit and magistrates refused the application 11 08 11h & 18c Electric Theatre opened Market Hill, cinematograph licence refused & restricted to non-flammable film [M]

1911 11 24

The University and Town Roller Skating Rink will open its doors as the County Rink Cinema, Magrath Avenue. A small portion of the large building is being converted into an up-to-date picture theatre where the very best films will be shown. The ticket will also give free entry to the rink and use of skates. The rink will certainly be smaller but still allow for racing and hockey. Gymkhanas and carnivals will continue to be held. 11 11 24b [M]

1912 07 12

New Cinema Theatre in Mill Road, Covent Garden, should be set back – 12 07 12f

1912 07 26

Mr Lloyd ex-manager, pianist and vocalist of the East Road Picture Palace told the court that Mr Hawkins had informed him he would close it for a month but that he should move to a new hall in Herne Bay. But he did not give notice or fill in the month as promised. Mr Hawkins, the proprietor of this and other halls in Cambridge, said he had tried to find Lloyd work and he'd be pleased for him to open at the Picture Palace again on August Bank Holiday Monday. Lloyd was a very able and competent man and it was astonishing he should cut his throat in this way. The case was dismissed. 12 07 26n

1912 11 09

Varsity cads disrupt cinema [3.3]

1912 12 19

Cambridge Picture Playhouse Ltd issue prospectus for new cinema in Mill Road due to phenomenal success of their Cambridge Electric Theatre on Market Hill [3.4]

1913

Playhouse Cinema opened, first purpose-built cinema in Cambridge: had its own orchestra & camera man who took pictures of local events for newsreels [2.10, M]

1913

Hippodrome reopened as Gaiety (closed c1915) [M]

1913 04 11

Mr W.L. Raynes applied for a cinematograph and music licence for the new Picture Playhouse being erected in Mill Road. The building, which is fireproof, will accommodate 167 in the gallery and 602 in the body of the hall. The architect, Mr Baines, said the walls, which were 25 feet high, complied with byelaws and steel stanchions had been embedded in the brickwork which could not possibly bend as the result of a strong wind. 13 04 11 p9 CIP

1913 04 18

The handsome new Electric Picture Palace being erected on the corner of Covent Garden, Mill Road, is making excellent progress with up to 35 men working on the job. When complete it will have the handsomest front of any place of entertainment in Cambridge. There will be a vestibule where 60 people can wait under shelter and the seats will be of the tip-up variety, upholstered in plush. The Electric Theatre, as well as that on Market Hill, will be under the management of Mr Adrian Jordan but the programmes will be quite distinct. 13 04 18 p9 CIP

1913 04 23

Magistrates heard two cases involving the new Picture Playhouse in Mill Road. Messrs Picture and Sons, the builders, were summonsed under the Lords Day Observance Act for working there on Whit Sunday. There was no evidence and the case was dismissed. But the Manager of the Electric Light Company was fined for parking his car across the footway in Covent Garden at the back of the cinema. He claimed it was in the entrance-yard that was filled with parking materials. He had pushed it in as far as he could and pedestrians could pass easily. He was there for 20 minutes and had moved as soon as he'd been asked by a policeman. 13 04 23 p9 CIP

1913 05 09

Yes! It is true! Perfectly true! That the new Picture Playhouse in Mill Road will open at 2.30 on Whit Monday, and present the strongest picture programme ever seen in Cambridge. It is also true, that an equally strong programme will be presented at the Electric Theatre, Market Hill 13 05 09 p01 CIP

1913 05 09

Picture Playhouse has been put up in record time. Films will include one taken by Mr Adrian Jordan's operators, 'Hustling at Cambridge' shows the remarkable rapidity with which the new Picture Playhouse has been erected 13 05 09 p07 CIP

1913 05 16

The newly-opened Picture Playhouse in Mill Road is the most comfortable in Cambridge. From the imposing frontage with its domes and balcony, through the hall, brightly lit and tastefully furnished, to the magnificent proscenium, everything is of the very best. A small orchestra adds much to the attractiveness of the entertainment. All the nearly 800 seats were filled on the first night and hundreds had to be turned away. The films included some taken by the Company's own operator and 'The 13th Man', about an undergraduate club whose reunion leads to some remarkable incidents. The show is continuous and the programme changed twice a week. 13 05 16 p7 CIP

1913 10 17

Kinemacolor visit 13 10 17 p11 CIP

1913 10 24

Kinemacolor visit Guildhall – includes colour pictures of Cambridge 13 10 24 p12 CIP

1913 11 07

The Rink Picture Palace, Hertford Street plans to show Dante's 'Inferno' was attacked by the Mayor: he had received many letters from residents; if shown any renewal of the licence by justices would be refused at once, he warned. The manager, Syd Byron wrote to the Presiding Magistrate. He offered to give a private performance and cut any objectionable scenes. Magistrates were equally divided and could not therefore prohibit the showing. They hoped he would not show it. But Mr Byron decided to go ahead 13 11 07 p10 CIP

1914 04 10

Under the proposed new regulation every cinematograph house should have a fireman in uniform to take precautions against fire and attend to the appliances. But when the Cambridge Picture Playhouse was built on Mill Road it met all the regulations and they had blankets and appliances with a fire drill each week. To have a fireman in uniform would be expensive and was apt to produce a panic in the event of a fire, magistrates were told 14 04 10f

1914 07

Magistrates ban boxing film - "grandmotherly legislation" [3.7]

1914 08 21

The woman in the box office of the picture theatre at the Workman's Hall said she had been told not to let in any child under 14 unless accompanied by someone over 14. She had to turn away a great number. After they passed her they were questioned by the manager, Mr Billings. She could see the seats in the hall and children were supposed to sit together. Henry Kelly said he went with his brother and sister Blanche, 11. The boys sat at the back but she went to the front because she could not see. This was against the new regulations and a technical offence had been committed. 14 08 21 p3

1914 08 28

Mr W. Jaggard of Tenison Road said he visited the Empire Musical Hall. It was an exceptionally large house and people were sitting on the hot water pipes. The film suddenly stopped & he saw a piece of the film burning in the operator's box. Someone called out 'fire'. & there was a general stampede. The hall was quickly cleared but two tables had been placed in the exit to the right of the stage. The management was fined 14 08 28

1915

County Rink Cinema requisitioned (till 1919) [M]

1915 02 26

The management of the Picture Playhouse in Mill Road decided it would be better if they could give high-class variety turns between the pictures. They asked Northfield & Son of Castle Street, who had done much work for them, to enlarge the stage and do the job quickly. But then they disputed the cost.

There had been no estimate requested, the job had been difficult and the Cinema kept adding extra things 15 02 26

1915 07 02

Eastern Counties Cinema Company in liquidation; only assets the effects at the Gaiety Theatre, (the old Hippodrome) 15 07 02 p2

1915 08 06

Playhouse to feature Capt Villiers' wireless airship to fly around the auditorium controlled by wireless apparatus from stage and bomb audience with balls 15 08 06 p4

1915 08 27

Victoria Cinema: A.J. pointer applies for cinematograph exhibition at the Victoria Cinema ... had held licence for music and dancing since April and for four years the premises had been used for cinema shows under a music and dancing licence. As intended to show some recruiting pictures which used 'inflammable' films was necessary to obtain formal licence. Floor had been lowered, main gangway 4ft wide. The film chamber built outside main building with automatic shutters, could be emptied in less than two minutes 15 08 27 p4 Electric Theatre refurbished & reopened as Victoria Cinema [M]

1915 12 02

Playhouse failed to black out balcony 15 12 02 p5 CIP

1916

Empire renamed Kinema, films only [M]

1919

County Rink Cinema reconstructed, reopened as Rendezvous Cinema [M]

1919 12 17

Two new cinema plans rejected, Sussex Street and Guildhall Street – surprise decision – 19 12 17e

1920

1920 01 14

Cambridge Picture Playhouse Ltd annual, meeting to alter articles of Association; have acquired site in Sidney St & Hobson St where propose to erect fine new building – Ch 20 01 14a

1920 04 07

Sussex Street to be widened, proposed cinema vetoed as would delay work on houses; suggestion that council buy plot and erect municipal cinema to avoid paying heavy compensation – Ch 20 04 07a, b

1920 05 14

Sussex Street cinema lively discussion, not approve plans - CDN 20 05 14

1920 05 20

Guildhall Cinema plans on site of the Black Swan, Fabb & Tyler printing works and an empty shop – should concentrate on building homes – 20 05 20

1920 06 17

Picture Playhouse Company appeal for erection of a kinema on the Sussex Street site - CDN 20 06 17

1920 06 19

Long debate re new cinema Sussex St & Guildhall St, building definitely vetoed by council [4.8, 5.1]

1920 07 02

Playhouse appeal against decision to block Sussex Street cinema lost - CDN 20 07 02

1920 07 07

Picture Playhouse Cinema appeal against refusal planning rejected by court – Ch 20 07 07c

1920 10 20

Proposed Kinema. At their meeting tomorrow, the Borough Council will be recommended by the Plans Committee to rescind their resolutions which placed a veto on the erection of the proposed kinema in Guildhall Street, and to give permission for the existing buildings to be demolished. The minute of the Plans Committee dealing with the matter states: A letter was read from Mr. A. J. Pointer, stating that a building on the site proposed to be used for the erection of a kinema would be unoccupied by the 25th October 1920, and asking that he might be allowed to proceed with the building of a kinema in Guildhall Street. Mr. Councillor Amies proposed, and Councillor Stephen seconded, that the letter be forwarded to the Council and that ... 20 10 20 CIP of

1920 10 28

Council approve demolition of buildings in Guildhall Street on site acquired by A.J. Pointer for an up-to-date Kinema – Ch 20 10 28b

1920 11 04

Plans for cinema on site of Old Spring Brewery, Chesterton Road (Tivoli); first plans for a temporary building consisting of a stage and dressing room in the garden, later plans for roofing over the garden between the building and Chesterton Road – CDN 20 11 04

1921 01 05

Proposed Sussex Street cinema plans discussed – 21 01 05

1921 01 19

Sussex Street cinema – undesirable on the site proposed – 21 01 19a, b

1921 03 30

Corporation refuse plans for conversion Automobile Company premises in Hobson Street into a kinema; Picture Playhouse Company to appeal over their plans for cinema in Sidney Street – 21 03 30j

1921 08 31

Central Cinema licensed for film, singing, dancing & music – 21 08 31b; full-page feature – 21 08 31d,e, f

1921 11

Court case over Cambridge Picture Playhouse Ltd – Council compelled to pass plans they had previously rejected [2.2]

1921 11 16

Charlie Chaplin film in Guildhall, staged by A.J. Pointer of Victoria Cinema – 21 11 16a

1921 11 16

Sidney Street cinema – Corporation had refused as want to widen Sidney Street, were wrong – 21 11 16n

1922 06 06

In the death of Mr Ernest Edward Hayward Cambridge has lost a much respected townsman. He was one of the first to start cinemas in the town, and used to arrange for displays at garden parties and

gave performances in the Corn Exchange and Guildhall. The "Arcadia" on St Andrew's-hill was managed by him and he was famed for the excellent variety entertainment given there. Indeed, deceased was responsible for the commencement of high-class variety shows in the town. He was an amateur actor of repute and for many years played the humorous lead in Bijou Amateur D.C. productions. He belonged to the Cambridge Pierrot Troupe, a concert party which existed from 1897 to 1901 solely for charitable purposes 22 06 06

1923 10 08

On Thursday the Central Cinema once again opens its doors, and another step towards a brighter Cambridge will be achieved. The main scheme of alteration has been the heightening of the roof, the removal of the pillars and improvement of the ventilation schemes. The absence of the pillars, which at times were a source of discomfort to some of the audience, will alone reconcile patrons to their long period of exclusion. The decorative scheme is entirely new and is based in shades of coffee and dark walnut, relieved with Wedgwood blue, an effective combination which is continued in the huge lampshades, which were always such a feature of the decoration. Another big feature is a new screen and projection which has been carried out by the Gaumont Company. The projection is now situated about half way down the hall, and not at the back as previously c23 10 08

1923 10 12

The long-awaited for reopening of the Central Cinema, Hobson Street, Cambridge, took place in the presence of a good attendance. This popular house of amusement had so established itself with the lovers of the silent drama that its temporary withdrawal from the ranks of amusement caterers has caused no little concern. Not a few patrons felt that if a particular film did not altogether appeal to them, there was always a good orchestra to listen to, and this is doubtless one of the secrets of the Central's success. Under the renewed direction of Miss Norma Thomson the orchestra is better than ever, and some distinctly appropriate music was played with skill and efficiency 23 10 12

1923 11 03

The subject of the censorship of cinematograph films came before the Cambridgeshire county council. They agreed that no film - other than photographs of current events - which has not been passed for universal exhibition by British Board of Film Censors shall be exhibited without the consent of the council. The Vice Chancellor thought that films such as those of the rags on Market Hill, he personally would be very glad to see stopped. (Laughter.) If there were no films of "rags" there would be no "rags" to film. (Laughter) 23 11 03

1924 08 12

After extensive alterations and repairs the Rendezvous cinema, Cambridge, which will now be known as the New Rendezvous, was reopened. Considerable improvement have been made in the appearance of the interior and the seating is now most commodious. At the head of a long and attractive programme is "The Cabaret Dancer" featuring Rudolph Valentino and Mae Murray. The film is good entertainment but one looks for a little more acting, especially on the part of Valentino who, as the lover, really fails to impress 24 08 12

1925 03 16

The "Tivoli", Cambridge's new cinema on Chesterton Road will be opened on Thursday and many people have been speculating as to what it looks like inside. A representative of the CDN who had a look around came away very much impressed with the general air of comfort and the attractiveness of the interior. Over 600 people can be seated in the body of the hall and gallery. It has comfort, excellent lighting and excellent decoration. If you want a private box for six people you may have one for the sum of 15s 25 03 16 [2.4,M]

1925 03 20

Described as "Chesterton's super cinema", the Tivoli made its debut before the Cambridge public when there were two opening performances. Elaborate, cosy, artistically lighted and efficiently ventilated, Cambridge's sixth cinema has every justification for expressing itself in superlatives. It has

a courteous staff of brown-uniformed attendants, an excellent orchestra and a screen sufficiently large to do justice to the most elaborate film productions. The projection last night was not perfect, but this was merely a matter of adjustment 25 03 20

1925 12 05

The public examination of the film hirer of the Rendezvous Cinema was held at the Cambridge Bankruptcy Court. He had taken over the lease from Mrs Mason in June 1924 with Mr Wallace Lester and managed the business on behalf of the partnership. The concern never made any profits. He started with a salary of £10 a week and as the concern did not go very well it was reduced to £5. The cinema took about £90 a week, and wages and other expenses amounted to £120 a week, so that there was a gross loss every week 25 12 05, 25 12 09

1926 12 16

It may not be generally known to the Cambridge public that Mr Carne, the manager of the Playhouse, Mill Road, is the "Victor Carne" who figures in the record list of the Vocalion Gramophone Co. He has recorded "The Holy City" and "The Star of Bethlehem" for their Christmas list and these and other of his records are obtainable at Messrs Leavis's, Regent Street. Wireless enthusiasts will no doubt remember the many times he has sung from London and Daventry 26 12 16

1927 02 01

The Rendezvous placard trolley, which has so many times gone its rounds of the streets of Cambridge advertising "thrillers" and "heart appeal" stories at this cinema met with an ignominious fate at the hands of undergraduates. It was seized by a party of merry gowmsmen and pulled in triumph down Hertford Street and Magdalene Street where they sought to dispose of it by pushing it into the river. It fell on to the landing stage moored at this point but with undamped ardour the undergraduates endeavoured by their united efforts to confine this "publicity agent on wheels" to the cold depths of the Cam. Then, the last rites having been performed, the revellers went on their way rejoicing. 27 02 01

1927 02 04

The Rendezvous Dance Hall asked for an extension of the dancing licence. The hall was built in 1909 as a skating rink and there was then no houses in Magrath Avenue. Those who came to live there afterwards came knowing the hall was there. From 1912 it was used as a variety and picture hall and in 1915 was commandeered for the War Office. In 1919 it was returned and conducted as a dance hall and cinema. In 1925 magistrates decided it should be open until midnight but there were complaints that people leaving made a noise with their motors & cycles. It was the best dance hall in Cambridge and now no one ever dreams of a dance ever terminating until 12. The Guildhall and Masonic Hall had licences until 2 a.m. 27 02 04

1927 03 16

The owners of the Playhouse, Mill Road, Cambridge, have just completed negotiations for the sale of that cinema to a syndicate who are said to be the owners of the Central Cinema and the Tivoli. We understand that the transfer will take place in September. The Picture Playhouses Ltd, who owned the Playhouse, also have property in Sussex Street and they are also disposing of this. 27 03 16

1927 06 09

"Grit" is an undergraduate film taken by a little Cine-Kodak and projected by the Kodascope at the Tivoli Cinema. It is believed to be the first serious attempt in an English University to obtain experience in the technique of film production and is one of the first amateur films to be exhibited in the country. It has been directed by Mr Dennis Arundell and we get some good views of Cambridge streets and colleges. It shows how the stroke of a college crew is kidnapped so his boat might not go head of the river. 27 06 09

1928 10 18

Cambridge Guardians have sanctioned the provision of a cinematograph at the Poor Law Institution. A Kodascope machine will be installed and a subscription raised to cover the cost of £1 a week. The provision of music on cinematograph or wireless was just as much part of the Institution as providing medical and dental treatment. They also considered the installation of a system of telephones 28 10 18

1929

Victoria Cinema final performance, building converted to Electricity offices [M]

1929 02 05

The latest form of political propaganda, the Conservative's touring 'Talkifilm' is visiting Cambridge. The programme includes a speech by the Prime Minister which gives an uncanny effect of realism and a silent film showing the opening up of Canada. The van will visit Pound Hill, the Premier Hall Chesterton and Occupation Road, winding up at Cherry Hinton Road corner 29 02 05

1929 06 28

Talkies to start in Cambridge August – Central Cinema – 29 06 28 p8

1929 08 13

Central cinema preparations for talkies CDN 13.8.1929

1929 08 17

Cambridge about to see the 'Talkies', Southend says no, 28 08 17 p6*

1929 08 20

Talkies arrive - Broadway Melody at the Central cinema, 29 08 20 p6*

1929 09 13

Band of Hope cinema – David Moore – CDN 13.9.1929

1929 10 10

Performances of the talkie 'College Love' at the Central Cinema, Cambridge, were marred by undergraduates. The Manager admitted that to show such a film at the beginning of term was unfortunate. The undergraduates meet old pals, have drinks together and get more exuberant than usual. They were also resentful at the American features introduced into college life as they know it. Scenes of a match corresponding to Rugby were greeted with many 'cat-calls' while nobody expects undergraduates to remain silent during the portrayal of anything in the amorous line. The cinema has a special telephone by which the volume of extraneous noise is gauged by an operator. He had occasion to request several of the disturbers to remain quieter. CDN 10.10.1929

1930

1930 05 10

The new talkie installation nearing completion at the Tivoli cinema, Cambridge, is manufactured by British Acoustic and was selected on account of its purity of reproduction. The entire sound equipment is duplicated so that no failure or breakdown can interfere with the performance. The programme selected for the opening week features Maurice Chevalier in 'Innocents in Paris' supported by the comedy 'Talkie'. 30 05 10a & b

1930 07 12

Great liberties have been taken with Sherlock Holmes and in plays and films you can learn things that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle himself never knew. In 'The Three Students' Sir Arthur laid the scene in a Cambridge college but in the 'Moriarty' film Holmes and Watson are both shown as undergraduates. It was here that their great friendship began and from here that Holmes set forth to track down Moriarty and his gang 30 07 12b

1930 09 20

The whole of Mill Road, Cambridge, was affected by a two-hour electricity stoppage which came just as the first performance finished at both the Playhouse and Kinema cinemas. The Kinema audience who had been watching a Western thriller, whiled away the time in community singing. But some trouble was experienced with the queue for the last show at the Playhouse which did not finish until midnight. 30 09 20

1930 10 11

For the past few months workmen have been engaged in constructing Cambridge's new Central Cinema in Hobson Street. The interior is decorated in a style reminiscent of the Regal Super Cinema at Marble Arch. The prevailing colours are mauve, orange and blue and the whole is surmounted by a dome in the form of a large star surrounded by sky effects. On each of the walls there are large panels with ornamental plastering surmounted by a design in the form of sunrise and illuminated by hidden lights. 30 10 11 [M,3.5,3.12]

1930 10 13

Crowds thronged Hobson Street endeavouring to gain admission to the opening of the new Central Cinema. Many were unsuccessful. The Mayor gave a civic blessing to the picture house: it was appropriate because the assessment value of the property would go up and Hobson Street was going to pay a large contribution to the rates. The film was Harold Lloyd's first talkie 'Welcome Danger'. 30 10 13

1931 03 20

Thieves stole £250 from the Cambridge Central Cinema when a safe containing the day's takings was rifled. Spread along the gangway in the middle of the balcony were a quantity of coppers, the result of a lengthy sorting of coins. No trace of entry could be found and it is believed the intruders were among the audience at the last performance and hid themselves in the lavatories or storerooms, eluding the fireman who makes a final inspection of the building before leaving. 31 03 20c

1931 05 29

Cambridge professors were amongst scientists who made a film at Spicers of Sawston and less than four hours afterwards saw themselves in natural colours on the screen. Experiments in colour have been going on for two years. At present efforts are being concentrated on motion-picture film. One of the difficulties has been the provision for a sound track but this has been surmounted and talking colour films will be made. Sawston may become a complete film colony rivalling Elstree in importance. 31 05 29a

1931 07 17

Fire completely destroyed the Rendezvous Cinema and Dance Hall at Magrath Avenue, Cambridge. The only part left standing is the fireproof operating box, which is really a separate structure. Staff removed 12,000 feet of film which, if reached by the flames, might have caused a serious explosion. The most spacious dance floor in the Eastern Counties was reduced to charred bits of wood. Renovations and improvements to the dance hall lounges were nearing completion and were to be opened as a special attraction. 31 07 17j & k [M,3.14]

1931 07 31

The last of the Cambridge silent cinemas is to turn 'talkie'. The Western Electric system is to be installed at the Kinema and the first sound film to be presented will be "Song o' my Heart" starring John McCormack. With the new system the Kinema will be open continuously from 2.30 till 10.30. 31 07 31b

1931 08 28

The new Victoria Cinema on Market Hill, Cambridge opens today. The auditorium is an example of complete harmony between the architect and the decorative painter. No architectural enrichment is applied to the walls, which remain for the most part in darkness, but when the space is filled with light

a gorgeous flow of rich colours rises like waves from the back of the house to reach a climax in the rich proscenium curtain of crimson and gold.

31 08 28h 1,500 guests, Sep [M,3.16]

1931 09 04

Cambridge's new Victoria Cinema possesses a theatre organ of the most modern type, a three manual Christie built by Messrs William Hill and Norman and Beard who have been responsible for many of the finest cinema organs in the world. It is placed on one side of the proscenium in two specially constructed chambers which house 2,000 wooden and metal pipes each of which has been 'voiced' by an expert. In the centre of the orchestra pit, placed on an electric lift, is the beautifully decorated console from which the entire organ is controlled. 31 09 04c

1931 09 04

Inquiries by the News confirm that the Central Cinema in Hobson Street is perfectly sound, despite rumours to the contrary. As part of the building is over the old King's Ditch, special attention was paid to the concrete foundations and reinforced with steel. The balcony, designed to carry 500 people, will take 2,000. The whole building is as sound today as it was when completed nearly 12 months ago. The only possible work is the renewal of some of the decorations as these were applied to wet plaster. 31 09 04e

1931 10 02

Cinemas – are they morally clean? – 31 10 02c

1931 12 11

A Band of Hope meeting in the Bethel Baptist Church, Swavesey welcomed Mr and Mrs David Moore and their programme of moving pictures. Mrs Moore deplored the fact that the gambling spirit was so rife and a scientific film showed the narcotic effect of alcohol. Pictures of the Skegness excursion gave great delight as many people saw themselves on the screen. They were followed by film of a garden party in Christ's College and the colleges in their winter mantle of snow. 31 12 11g

1932 01 01

If you spent Christmas in Cambridge you may see yourself on the screen at the Kinema. The enterprising management sent a man round with a cine-camera who took 'shots' of people doing their shopping on Market Square, a Christmas Day football match on Jesus Green and the Boxing Day meet of the Cambs Harriers showing many well-known faces including that of the Mayor drinking out of the stirrup cup. We hope it will not be the last time the Kinema send their camera round the town 32 01 01

1932 11 25

A new Rendezvous has risen from the ashes of the old in Magrath Avenue. Everything has been done to make it a place for entertainment, comfort and enjoyment. The cinema will seat 1,000 with plenty of leg-room while the ballroom, decorated in pink and gold, has a fine maple floor for 400 couples. A new band from London has been engaged for the dance season – it is distinctly hot in style. 32 11 25 [3.15]

1933 07 25

Cambridge's New Theatre is to be run as a cinema but every effort will be made to continue some theatrical form of entertainment. It has been leased to Mr P.V. Wallis who was the originator of the Central Cinema ten years ago and later took over the Tivoli and Playhouse cinemas. A Western Electric sound projector system will be installed together with some structural alterations and it is hoped to reopen in September. 33 07 25, 33 08 15, 33 09 02.

1933 07 28

The Central Hall in Market Passage may become a cinema where cultural films would be shown during the University term. It would be run by Openshaw Higgins, formerly manager of The Tivoli

cinema. Mr Mullett, the architect said the amount of film in the proposed projection box would not generate sufficient heat in event of a fire to buckle the iron armour of which it would be constructed. 33 07 28

1933 07 29

Are now seven cinemas plus the Central Hall, notes on first films 33 07 29 [1.14, M]

1933 08 21

Some early entertainments in Cambridge – magic lantern, Poole's Myorama etc – 33 08 21

1933 09 05

Five Cambridge playhouses remembered – 33 09 05

1933 10 14

Cambridge's eighth cinema, the Cosmopolitan, otherwise the Central Hall in Market Passage, will provide a regular home for cultural films. Five years ago a Film Guild was started to show a more intelligent class of film, then Mr Openshaw Higgins tried putting them into the ordinary programme before deciding on a new small cinema. It will give three performances each day during Term. 33 10 14 33 10 17 [1.7, 1.6 M]

1934 01 08

A film entitled 'Cambridge and the University Town, directed by Peter Collin of Newmarket is a twelve-minute pictorial survey with shots of the backs, boating scenes and Grantchester. He had the collaboration of R. Colville-College, an undergraduate of King's. The photography, which reaches a very high standard, is by S.W. Bowler who shows considerable promise. The film, released by Equity British Films will be shown in Ely, Littleport and Newmarket. As a lad Mr Collin assisted in the operating box of the Victoria Cinema and is now a director of Argyle Talking Pictures. 34 01 08

1935 03 06

Daylight cinema vans organised by National Publicity Bureau visit [1.18]

1935 06 15

The Cosmopolitan Cinema in Market Passage was started two years ago by Mr N. Openshaw Higgins as an experiment. Increasing numbers of people have welcomed the opportunity of seeing cultural films that do not appeal to be masses. Now it is moving to the new theatre being constructed in Peas Hill. There has been discussion as to the most suitable name for the new venture. The Arts Theatre was talked of, but a more likely choice now is the Market Theatre. 35 06 15b [1.19]

1935 06 20

The Theatre Cinema returned to a programme of cine-variety with a programme of stage turns and films. The variety bill is headed by that inimitable comedian, Max Miller, 'the cheeky chappy'. All his jokes have the air of spontaneity and his suggestion of breezy good humour is infectious. The stage programme includes the most daring roller-skating acts we have seen, a juggler and a young lady who has achieved success as a wireless crooner. The principal film is 'The Personality Kid' with a clever cartoon and the News. 35 06 20

1935 08 06

The management of the Theatre Cinema (New Theatre) have returned to their popular cine-variety policy. There are four excellent stage turns and an exceptionally fine film. A snappily presented singing and dancing act featuring Jack Lewis and his Rolling Stones with the Wellington Sisters forms the principal item in the stage show, combining dancing by a cheery trio, saxophone work and percussion 'fireworks'. Savona is a remarkable juggler while 'the racketeers of mirth, Roy Lester and Jack Cranston offer a quick-fire cross-talk act. Finally Sereno and June's head-to-head balancing and tumbling act has much which is new even in these days when vaudeville simply abounds with this kind of act. 35 08 06a

1935 08 27

Political travelling cinema, New Square car park – photo – 35 08 27

1935 10 01

Cambridge Justices approved the plans of Associated British Cinemas for a new cinema to be erected in St Andrew's Street. The site had been left derelict after fire burnt down a large part of the Castle Hotel in 1934. The application was opposed by the Theatre Cinema and the Rendezvous. There were nine cinemas in Cambridge with 6,300 seats and it would be impossible for them all to carry on if a super cinema like this were built. The Victoria was built four years ago, the Arts Theatre was completely new and the Rendezvous was having more seats and an organ. But the Cosmopolitan had closed and the Guildhall and Corn Exchange licences were rarely used. 35 10 01 & a

1935 10 22

The new Rendezvous cinema and ballroom was opened with a recital by Reginald Dixon, the famous Blackpool organist. It is the latest in modern styles with new plush 'tip-ups' accommodating 1,100 people, the latest Penum heating and ventilation and the Compton organ. Film star Charles (Buddy) Rogers said it was as beautiful as any he had seen in the United States. The show was late starting as guests were unable to get through the congestion in the street outside. Afterwards a private reception and dance was held in the new ballroom which has also been redecorated and re-furnished throughout. 35 10 22, 35 10 19

1936

Arts Theatre holds regular film seasons, (till 1940) [M]

1936 01 08

Union Cinemas, the company controlling five Cambridge cinemas have joined forces with Arthur Segal to acquire more sites – 36 01 08a

1936 03 09

The Rendezvous, in Magrath Avenue has been turned into a modern luxury super-cinema with a new café restaurant. The latest talkie equipment ensures perfect reproduction and sound, the films are of the highest quality and patrons are assured of a three-hour programme. An added attraction is the illuminated Compton organ which is played at every performance. The ballroom has been re-decorated and is one of the finest in the Eastern Counties with popular tea dances and combined tea, picture and dancing tickets. 36 03 09

1936 05 14

A proposal to sell land adjoining Cambridge Cattle Market for the erection of a cinema was defeated. The Market was increasing every week and nobody could foresee what the land would be wanted for in 75 years' time. There was not the slightest need for another cinema and it would spoil the area. People who had bought their homes adjacent to the site were very upset, fearing that their homes would be devalued. But others thought it was a jolly good idea: it was a long journey into town and it would be a blessing to be able to visit a show near home. 36 05 14a

1936 08 27

Mystery surrounds the disappearance of a brilliant young organist, Johnnie Francis. Originally he was a musician in a theatre orchestra but when this was replaced by an organ he was given the opportunity to learn that. He fell out of work and made his way to Cottenham when Miss Maud Gautrey found him work picking strawberries. He was given an audition at the Rendezvous Cinema in Cambridge, borrowing clothes to replace his own worn outfit. He obtained the post at once and played there for a week before drawing his salary and walking out. He has not been heard of since. 36 08 27

1936 12 12

All Cambridge listened to the farewell message broadcast by Prince Edward from Windsor Castle. At the Theatre Cinema an announcement was made that the feature film would be interrupted for the relaying of the speech by courtesy of the BBC. Just before ten the curtains over the screen were lowered. When they were drawn back a large receiving set was seen in the centre of the stage with a single spot-light shining on it. The lights were dimmed. A tense, almost painful silence fell on the audience. Suddenly it was broken. Sir John Reith was heard. 'This is Windsor Castle – His Royal Highness, Prince Edward' 36 12 12a

1937 01 26

Fulbourn Hospital is to have a cinema projector following a demonstration of both a 16mm and 35 mm machine. The smaller one was noisy and while it would project for ordinary purposes it would need to be in the same room as the patients. The projectors were of a delicate nature and if they got men of the labouring class moving it about they would get a lot of damage. The larger one was superior, it was compact, easy to work and the pictures were clear and good-sized. . Mr Stubbs said: "The sound was clear and even with a Yankee voice was tolerable – and sometimes they are not" (Laughter). 37 01 26a

1937 03 31

The new Regal Cinema, seating about 1,900 people, includes all the latest luxury features with luxurious tip-up seats. It has equipment to enable those hard of hearing to follow the sound with ease and comfort. The first attraction will be the new Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers show, 'Swing Time', when William Southwold will be at the mighty Compton organ. A resident organist will play at each performance 37 03 31, 37 04 05a & b [1.4,2.16]

1937 04 03

One of the big attractions at the new Regal Cinema is the Compton organ, fitted with an illuminated console which produces a wonderful range and combination of colours. It is described as the 'most remarkable instrument of its kind in the world, producing every kind of music from the thrilling peal of a cathedral organ to the colour and tone of a symphony orchestra or the rhythm of a modern dance band'. 37 04 03b

1937 05 17

A police cordon was thrown round the Regal Cinema in the early hours of Sunday morning after PC Parker saw a man's head out of a bottom floor window. Two men ran away; one was brought down with a rugby tackle by a passing cyclist, Arthur Wright, another punched Inspector Witham with a knuckleduster. One was alleged to have packets of gelignite in his possession, another was found with fuse detonators. Later Scotland Yard's Flying Squad arrested a fifth man. 37 05 17a

1937 06 01

Regal cinema raid – more details 37 06 01& a

1937 09 08

Rendezvous Cinema clerk fraud trial – 37 09 08 & a

1938 01 08

After a successful fortnight of the pantomime 'Cinderella', the Theatre Cinema is closing down without any indication as to what its future may be. It was 42 years ago that the New Theatre was opened and has had a great history. Many of our leading actors have appeared and all tastes catered for – comedy, drama, musicals and grand opera. It was the coming of films that changed the Theatre's fortunes and after a hopeless struggle it was converted into a cinema with an occasional week of variety. 38 01 08a (reopened 1939 but requisitioned 1940-47 [2.18,M])

1938 01 19

Theatre cinema may be turned into ice rink or swimming pool. Was not suitable for talkies and with cine-variety those who maid the most got the worst seats – letters 38 01 19b

1938 02 07

Undergraduate misbehaviour in cinemas – 38 02 07

1938 03 03

Creditors of the Rendezvous cinema accepted an offer of 10s in the pound, payable immediately. After Mr C.L. Naylor took over management of the Company in 1937 it had made quite a profit but previous debts were responsible for the present unfortunate position. The sale was completed in Feb 1938 when the cinema and equipment was disposed of for £18,373, a loss of about £10,000. 38 03 03
Rendezvous Cinema renamed Rex Cinema [M]

1938 05 31

Memories of stage and screen – 38 05 31w

1938 11 22

The Theatre Cinema reopened after a closure of over nine months with a performance of ‘The Mikado’ by Cambridge Amateur Operatic Society. They had found the building in a poor and dirty condition and put in much work to recondition it. Now it was crowded with a delighted throng; it was itself again. That pre-overture buzz of conversation created a delightful feeling of mild excitement. At the final curtain everyone was thoroughly happy 38 11 22

1939 04 25

The Central Cinema, Hobson Street, was burnt to a shell in the early hours of the morning. Only the fire-proof operating box, the foyer, crush hall and some of the back stalls remain intact. Firemen hauled hoses up to the roof of the Dorothy Café and from the high ladder of the Merryweather turntable in Hobson Street P.C. Kelly poured another stream of water on to the flames. But after an hour-and-a-half the roof fell in amid a shower of sparks. There was concern about Christ’s College chapel where the roof had been removed because of damage done by the death watch beetle and only a tarpaulin covered the wooden ceiling. But a shower of rain helped to prevent it catching alight 39 04 25a, b

1939 06 17

Theatre Cinema, St Andrew’s Street, known for many years as the New Theatre, was closed in January of last year after the pantomime but specially reopened for one week in November for the annual production by Cambridge Amateur Operatic Society of ‘The Pirates of Penzance’ Now the ABC company has decided to use the building once again as a cinema 39 06 17

1940

1940

Cosmopolitan opens full time [M]

1940 05 10

Sunday opening of cinemas debated, rejected – 40 05 10

1940 05 11

Cinemas allowed to open on Sundays to benefit RAF [1.21]

1940 05 17

Cambridge Building Material Supply Co started by Charles Lovell Naylor in 1930; built considerable number of houses in Scotland Road and King’s Hedges Road and sold all bar five. But problems at outbreak of war lead insolvency. Bought Rendezvous in 1930 and rebuilt it 1931 after fire. He lost

£2,000 over fire. In 1935 a limited liability company took over the cinema but sold it again because of his ill health – 40 05 17

1940 08 13

Mr Pointer owned Victoria Cinema and in 1929 Pointer & Co formed for purpose of building and running a modern cinema; attached was Still and Sugarloaf. In 1935 Cambridge Holdings Ltd was formed to acquire cinemas in Cambridge who wanted to acquire Victoria Cinema and restaurant. They paid Pointer & co for £30,500 – court case – 40 08 13a, 40 08 14b, 40 08 16

1941 04 24

A.J. Pointer cinema pioneer; took over Victoria Assembly Room in Market Hill which he ran as a roller skating rink, converting it into Cambridge's first cinema in 1910, had previously used Alexandra Hall for occasional picture shows. In 1916 he took over the Kinema, previously a variety theatre which is now the oldest cinema in Cambridge. Victoria closed 15 years ago and when new Vic re-opened under a company he handed over control to his son, Eric. Personally directed Kinema till last year when son Frank took over – 41 04 24a;

1941 04 26

There had been occasional films at Midsummer Fair but Pointer responsible for first regular showings at Alexandra Hall, now YMCA and comfortable seating was not one of the main attractions. Performances were shorter but comprised nine or 10 items such as five 'comics', one 'coloured trick', one news film of racing and two dramas. Early films were crude affairs and constant flickering made it seem as if picture taken in heavy downpour of rain – 41 04 26a.

1941 05 03

Early films – old Victoria cinema was called Electric Theatre and run by a Mr Jordain – 41 05 03a

1943 07 24

Cosmopolitan cinema sustained considerable damage from fire, part of ground floor and seats destroyed and ceiling broken away in places – 43 07 24

1945 06 29

Music, singing and dancing licences for Theatre Cinema, Regal, Victoria, Tivoli, Central and Playhouse transferred to Max Milder from Eric Lightfoot who leaving the A.B.C. company – CDN 45 06 29

1946 02 16

A.B.C. Minors, providing Saturday films for children, inaugurated – 46 02 16 (ends 1982) [4.1]

1947 05 11

Sunday opening due to expire [1.22]

1947 06 04

With regret many enthusiastic and appreciative cinema-goers have learned of the closing at the end of the week of the Cosmopolitan Cinema, Cambridge. For fourteen years now it has been open and has a proud record since right from its beginning it gave Cambridge something out of the ordinary. The owners of the Central Hall, the Conservative Club, have seen fit to raise the rent to a sum which the directors of the Cosmopolitan Cinema Ltd feel unable to pay. Developing out of the first Cambridge Film Society, the Cosmo was opened on October 16th, 1933. (It later reopened as the Arts Cinema in October 1947) 47 06 04

1947 08 09

Theatre Cinema (New theatre): reopens showing selected, probably continental films; building stripped of all furnishings during war & is now completely cleaned & redecorated, Aug [1.23]

1947 09 17

Cambridge's first midnight matinee, attended by film star Richard Attenborough, and stage-and-screen star Hermione Baddeley, drew a packed house of near 2,000 to the Regal last night. The show, organised by the Cambridge branch of the R.A.F. Association was part of the Battle of Britain Week activities. "Dicky" and "Totie" as the stars are popularly known made a stage appearance before the show. Major Simpson, area manager of A.B.C. cinemas recalled that Mr Attenborough was born in Cambridge. Dicky mentioned that thought he had been born in Cambridge he left the town "practically before my eyes were open". When the show finished shortly before two o'clock "Dicky" and "Totie" stayed behind to autograph programmes 47 09 17

1947 10 14

It was "L'Entente Cordiale" night when the redecorated New Theatre, Cambridge, after an almost ten-year closure, re-opened yesterday as a cinema for the showing of Continental films. The Cross of Lorraine hung side-by-side with the Union Jack outside the cinema in honour of the visit of Francoise Rosay, the famous French film star who performed the opening ceremony. The Mayor (Coun. Doggett) wished the venture every success and expressed the hope that successful films may be followed by stage plays. "We have one theatre in this town but in my opinion there is plenty of room for a second theatre, particularly one with a larger stage". Capt A.C. Taylor, Managing Director of the "Cambridge Daily News" echoed the hope that some theatrical shows would be staged 47 10 14 [2.9]

1947 10 17

The new "temple" of the fifth art was opened by the Mayor last night. The art is that of cinema; the "temple" the former Cosmopolitan in Market Passage, re-decorated and renamed the Arts Cinema. He said "I feel the cinema will prove an added amenity to Cambridge". The success of the cinema would depend to a very great extent on a wise selection of films and efficient management. Sound and projection have been improved since the cinema was the Cosmopolitan though teething troubles prevented both being experienced that their best. The seating - with seats from the Festival Theatre - is now sloped c47 10 16

1947 11 20

Many people unable to be in their homes listened to the broadcast of the Royal Wedding in Cambridge cinemas, all of which were thrown open for the purpose, free of charge. The biggest audience is reported from the Central Cinema who estimated the total as being in the neighbourhood of 500. The sound equipment at the Regal broke down at the last minute and the small queue which had formed there was diverted to the New Theatre opposite, where a set had been hastily brought from his home and installed in the foyer by the Manager and the thrilling, impressive and historic service of the wedding of H.R.H. Princess 47 11 20

1948 02 07

Theatre Cinema (New theatre) stage variety due to shortage of films [1.25]

1948 07 31

Arts Cinema try news theatre [1.27]

1949 10 11

Sir - I note with interest remarks about cinema entertainment particularly in reference to the 16 mm Film Exhibitors Guild. The Guild is well represented in this area. Mr Maddox of Orwell, trading as County Mobile Cinemas; Wrights Ltd of Cambridge, trading as Wright Mobile Cinemas and Mr Oddy of Waterbeach, trading as Globe Cinema Service. The Chairman is Mr David of David Film Library, Wisbech, a well-known film renter and mobile exhibitor 49 10 11

1950

1950 06 01

Film company International Realistic has been in Cambridge filming part of a feature film with many well-known local scenes as backgrounds. The film will probably be called “The scarlet thread”, and is an exciting “cops and robbers” starring Laurence Harvey and Kathleen Byron. Market Hill is included with a dash to Gt St Mary’s Passage and a realistic rugger tackle by the fountain. The exposed film was rushed each day to London for processing and back again next day in time for screening at the Victoria Cinema after the usual performances 50 06 01 [2.5]

1950 11 10

“Scarlet Thread” film to be shown at Victoria [2.6]

1951 05 16

The Playhouse Cinema, Mill Road, completed 38 years of service and entertainment. To celebrate the event the manager (Mr Eric Dallman) arranged a special birthday month. He opened with a brief history of the cinema and read telegrams of congratulation from Richard Todd and Joan Dowling, the two popular British stars. A request for any member of the audience who was at the opening in 1913 resulted in one patron coming to the stage. He was Mr W.J. Pugh who had been a regular patron since it opened. The audience was then introduced to the longest serving member of staff, Mrs F. Hewett who had done most jobs except the operating box – but thought she would like to try that as well! 51 05 16

1952 03 07

Kinema fire, p6

1952 08 23

Victoria restyled : “eurythmic”: designer, architect & illuminators combine to make symphony of shape, colour & tone” [2.7]

1952 09 13

Rex: newly appointed manager Lesley Halliwell turns it into repertory cinema [2.8]

1952 11 05

Some people at the Victoria Cinema almost believed they saw fish swimming above their heads in the middle of the auditorium. Others found it difficult not to duck when a cricket ball appeared to bounce right out of the screen. The cause was something new in cinema entertainment – the three-dimensional film. At present a special screen has to be used and audiences must wear tinted spectacles. Much still has to be done before stereoscopic films become commonplace but Cambridge is among the first places in England to welcome the arrival of the third dimension in the cinema

1952 12 24

Cambridge is the first city in the country to be able to see the latest model of the Synchro Screen in action. This R.C.A. invention has been installed at the Rex Cinema and will be a permanent feature. The new screen enhances the photography giving it extra depth. It does not go the whole way to providing three-dimensional pictures but is a great step forward. There are five similar screens now in existence but the one at the Rex is the latest type and 2,000 people came along to see it on Sunday

1953 01 09

Rex: new synchro-screen [2.9]

1953 05 22

The Playhouse Cinema on Mill Road, Cambridge, celebrates its 40th anniversary as a place of cinematic entertainment. It opened at Whitsun 1913 when there were two shows per evening with a children’s matinee on Saturdays. Nowadays we are used to newsreels which are distributed on a national basis but then their own cameraman took the pictures for a newsreel of local interest, including the Cambridge Police Sports and Juvenile Fishing Match. Music was supplied by the Playhouse’s own orchestra under Musical Director Max Bennett

1953 08 07

“Man in the dark”, the first feature-length three-dimensional film to be shown in the Eastern counties was screened at the Rex Cinema, Cambridge, to an invited audience. They went away feeling they had witness the most exciting event in screen history since ‘The Jazz Singer’ introduced sound in 1927. Mr R. Halliwell, the manager, said the extra charge for admission covered only the cost of hiring the Polaroid spectacles. The three-dimensional film holds such possibilities of screen terror that the deepies may tend at first to be creepies. To what extent Cambridge will succumb to third-dementia remains to be seen but the pre-view audience spent an enjoyable time c53 08 12

1955 04 06

One of the most remarkable developments in film technique is Perspecta Stereophonic sound which was displayed to invited guests at Cambridge’s Regal Cinema. This new and revolutionarily piece of equipment marks yet one step further in the development of film technique as an art. The visitors were also initiated into the mystery of how the size of the screen is changed to allow for the showing of popular Cinemascope films. 55 04 06

1954 04 17

A new experiment in children’s entertainment, the Roy Rogers Riders Club, is being launched at the Rex Cinema, Cambridge. It will be among the first British cinemas to use the scheme which provides first-rate Saturday morning entertainment for the under 16s. The charge for enrolment and a badge is 1s and admission to the shows is 6d per week. The clubs are under the direct guidance of Roy Rogers himself who formulated the club rules; its objects are to ensure that young cinemagoers see only the most wholesome entertainment and meetings begin with a special film of Roy Rogers saying the “cowboy’s prayer.

1955 03 22

Cambridge will be the first city to show Marlon Brando’s new film ‘The Wild One’, which looked as if it would not be seen in Britain at all. The film censor refused to give any certificate saying was too brutal and might have a bad effect on young people. But the proprietor of the Rex Cinema, Mr George Webb, asked the film people to send him a copy of the film and invited Cambridge magistrates to view it. They have granted it a local ‘X’ certificate. Columbia Film Company will ask British Railways to arrange special trains to Cambridge during the run. The story concerns a gang of young hooligans who terrorise a town because of the weakness by the local policeman. 55 03 22

1955 03 26

With the installation of Perspecta Stereophonic Sound, a vivid realism hitherto unknown in film entertainment is to be introduced to the patrons of Cambridge’s Regal Cinema. Chosen to introduce this very latest development in the cinema world is the film ‘Seven Brides for Seven Brothers’. Until now the Regal has been equipped with loud speakers behind only the centre of the screen. Now the sound will come from the exact places on the giant screen where the action indicates them and will give a new and higher quality of sound reproduction. 55 03 26b [2.12]

1955 06 24

Cambridge Central Cinema has installed a wide screen which allows a perfect view from any angle & is a vivid contrast with the former ‘postage stamp’ model. It has now come into line with the other main cinemas and is fully equipped for the showing of CinemaScope. The first film will be the new Technicolor musical, ‘Three for the Show’ starring Betty Grable 55 06 24 [2.13,3.19]

1956 03 16

On Thursday Clifford Birchall recorded a programme of popular music at the Hammond organ of the Cambridge New Theatre. Although the theatre is closing, the melodies will linger on, for this recording, arranged by King and Harper, will be played during the evening performance on Sunday at the Playhouse Cinema. 56 03 16b

1956 03 20

Hallens presented a feast of films to suit the taste of motor cyclists. Most were manufacturer's promotions but it was the film produced locally which aroused the most interest. It presented an entertaining picture of local scramble scenes with shots of local characters and celebrities. Those attending can also inspect the improvements to the workshops with special stands for the repair of the increasingly popular auto-cycle and scooter forms of transport. 56 03 20a

1956 05 09

The manager of Cambridge's Regal Cinema, Mr C.G. Mangold, won a glittering emerald-green Messerschmitt three-wheeler presented by 'Kinematograph Weekly' in conjunction with Columbia Pictures for arranging publicity for the film 'A Prize of Gold'. He organised a car rally, window displays and a personal visit of Andrew Ray. Mr Mangold is one of the outstanding managers in A.B.C. and has won a host of distinctions. 56 05 09

1956 10 01

Removal of mighty organ from pit of Victoria cinema - only other cinema organ at Regal never seen without dust cover, came up through floor, organist already playing [6.3]

1956 10 09

Cambridge Licensing Magistrates have asked Associated British Cinemas not to show the controversial American musical film 'Rock Around the Clock'. The film features a new style of dancing known as "Rock'n'Roll". It is a rhythm similar to some of the African native 'beats' and is alleged to have a startling effect on young people who like 'hot music'. In London dancing youngsters have caused trouble in the streets and assaults have been made on the police. 56 10 09

1956 10 12

Sir - my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed 'Rock Around the Clock' which we saw at Northampton. It gave us old age pensioners a taste of the vitality of youth and made a change from the 'Western' and 'sob-stuff' type of film. There was no rowdiness shown by any of the patrons in the cinema. It is a disappointment to read that it has been banned by magistrates and will not be shown in Cambridge - we should have made an effort to see it again - 'Two O.A.P.s, Vinery Road. 56 10 12g

1956 11 19

Two of Cambridge's long-established cinemas, the Playhouse and the Tivoli, will close after the last performance on Saturday. Associated British Cinemas say the heavy burden of entertainments tax has made them uneconomic. The majority of the 35 staff will be absorbed by the other cinemas in the group and others will join the private cinemas run by Mr George Webb. 56 11 19b [2.20, 2.21]

1956 12 22

Raymond Bennett, the talented comedian and theatre manager laments the closing down of the Playhouse in Mill Road. It was there he made his debut as a single-turn music hall artiste. In those days it had a small orchestra and had one turn each week with the pictures. They included Godwin Hunt, baritone and humorous vocalist, George Gass, comedian of 'The Magpies' concert party and Sydney Pratt the conjurer. 56 12 22a & b

1957 02 16

The closing of two Cambridge cinemas has made us aware of the difficulty they face. One major problem is Entertainment Tax. Out of every pound paid at the box office, 6s.5d. (33p) is taken for this tax and after film hire and wages the exhibitor gets only 5½d (2.5p) out of which he has to pay rent, depreciation and living expenses. No wonder 180 cinemas were forced to close last year. 57 02 16a

1957 10 01

The removal of the mighty organ from the pit of the Victoria Cinema illustrates graphically how far this kind of musical entertainment has fallen from public favour. The only other cinema organ in Cambridge - that at the Regal - is never seen without its dust cover. The management says it is kept

in good order and could be played at any time. However it would need a travelling organist to come up from A.B.C. headquarters in London. If the truth be told it is in permanent retirement. 57 10 01b

1958 06 13

'The Freshman' film has already established itself on the Cambridge scene. The appearance of cameras, technicians, stars and generators at various locations still causes a stir and there is never any lack of people watching the action. German film star Hardy Kruger, who plays an undergraduate, has had a bewildering initiation into real student life. He has seen the May Balls swinging on till dawn. And he has seen that car park on the Senate House roof. No wonder he looks worried! 58 06 13c, 58 06 12

1958 08 29

"The Freshman", a light-hearted film about life at Cambridge University, will bring in all the well-known local angles – the May Races and balls, chases by Proctors and their 'Bulldogs', visits to coffee bars – and of course, a local romance. It will star Hardy Kruger and Sylvia Syms. But they have had a mishap. While a motoring scene was being shot along Trumpington Road the crankshaft of a vintage 1927 Bentley car suddenly snapped. Now mechanics are searching for a spare, or a new car! 58 08 29a [2.23, 2.24]

1959 01 16

The Regal Cinema was crowded for the Cambridge premier of 'Bachelor of Hearts', the film of University life which was made on location in the city. A reception was attended by the film's producer, Mr Vivian Cox, director Wolf Rilla and one of the 'starlets' from the cast, Miss Gillian Vaughan. The film deals with the adventures of a young German student, played by Hardy Kruger, and an attractive Girton girl (Sylvia Syms). Comments varied widely but everyone agreed there were many good laughs along the way. No plans have been made for it to be shown in Oxford. 59 01 16c, 59 01 20, 56 01 21

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 07 09

Old Playhouse to become supermarket [5.2]

1961 11 10

Bingo is the new national craze. During the first few games of a Cambridge session television refugees toiled away at their bingo booklets, smog descending over their bent heads. Most of the audience were regulars. They 'never missed' because 'it was an evening out'. They were not lonely there, neither were they bored. The jackpot was a modest one – if it reached previous heights of £30-40 people would be queuing to get in. But at sixpence a time and with not a 'line', let alone a 'house' in credit, the evening could be an expensive one. 61 11 10a

1962 01 18

Council bans bingo on its premises – 62 01 18

1962 04 05

The new Victoria Ballroom was opened by Ronald Fraser, the film and television star, who had previously appeared at the Regal Cinema as part of its 25th anniversary celebrations. Converted from a café above the Victoria Cinema, it will reduce the number of 'wallflowers' on Saturday nights when special buffet dinner dances are being run at a cost of a guinea for a double ticket. When not in use for dancing it will still be put into service as a café 62 04 05 [5.3]

1962 06

First Cambridge film festival [2.26]

1962 06 01

Last picture show for minors, Victoria, first was 1946 [5.13]

1962 09 14

Maurice Stevenson started as a cinema projectionist in 1927 as a lad of 16 at the old Tivoli Cinema in Chesterton Road. They were the silent days. Then he went to the Regal and later the Central. In the old 'disc' days you had to be careful even closing the door in case you shook the needle out of its groove in the record. If you lost the synchronisation between the record and film it was the devil's own job getting it back again, he remembers. The machinery is much more simple to operate now. 62 09 14

1964 05 01

Arts Cinema is oldest repertory cinema in country; Norman Higgins opened it in 1933. Previously at the Tivoli he founded an undergraduate film society and leased Conservative Hall in Market Passage. Began showing films all year round in 1947 – 64 05 01cc

1964 05 08

Every Saturday children start arriving at the Victoria and Central cinemas for the matinee performances. Many are brought by their mothers who are grateful for the chance to do the weekend shopping without them. Before the film starts they sing 'We are Minors of the A.B.C.' to the tune of 'Blaze Away'. There's always one cartoon like Tweetie Pie, then the serial in which the action is fast and furious. It's followed by a short comedy film, then a full-length feature with plenty of action, usually made by the Children's Film Foundation 64 05 08

1966

Alfred Hitchcock visits Film Society [7.3]

1966 03 12

Kinema cinema, Mill Road closing; has 400 seats and staff of seven. Owner is George Webb. It may continue as cinema under new ownership – 66 03 12a (Reopens for Bingo & films [M])

1966 07 08

Bingo at the Kinema – feature – 66 07 08 & a

1967

Rex Cinema used as Bingo Hall (till 1970) [M]

1967 10 06

Victoria Cinema reopens with giant 70 mm screen, luxury lounge area replacing seats on ground floor; restaurant and ballroom refurbished – 67 10 06

1968 01 04

Victoria cinema projection equipment with projectionist Albert Waldock- feature – 69 01 04b

1969 03 19

ADC Theatre given permission to show films all year round , stands empty for much of year – 69 03 19d

1969 09 08

Maurice Stevenson, longest-serving film projectionist – memories – 69 09 08

1970

1970

Rex Cinema reopened after expensive refit [M5.7]

1971 04 14

Regal Cinema to be twinned – two different films to be shown – 71 04 14

1971 05 12

Regal cinema organ – last chance to preserve – 71 05 12

1972

Victoria Cinema renamed ABC 1 & second screen installed [M]

1972 01 12

Regal Cinema reopens as ABC 1 & 2 twin cinemas – illustrated feature – 72 01 12 [M,4.7]

1972 03 24

It was “eyes down” for the first time last night in Cambridge’s new £10,000 bingo hall which will offer enthusiasts an almost non-stop programme throughout afternoons and evenings six days a week. The bingo hall which can accommodate nearly 1,000 players at a single sitting, is in the converted former Central Cinema in Hobson Street 72 03 24

1972 08 17

The Rex cinema in Cambridge may soon echo to the moans and groans of live wrestling. This is just one of several ventures planned for the cinema by Victory Theatres who will take over as new owners in a few days’ time. The front of the cinema is to be re-modelled and additional heating installed. In keeping with its luxury refit The Rex is to be renamed the Royal Luxury Cinema. "It will be a cinema of the seventies", said the Managing Director of Victory Theatres, Mr Victor Freeman. Other ideas for the revamped Rex include a Christmas pantomime. Victory Cinemas are buying The Rex from Abbey Sports Club. The ballroom at the cinema will continue to be owned by Abbey Sports Club 72 08 17

1972 09 06

"The demolition of the old Y.M.C.A. building will no doubt bring a touch of nostalgia to many of the Cambridge residents who have lived here for well over 70 years. I can remember that the very first "talking pictures" in Cambridge were shown there. These took the form of a rather jerky film show, screened from the rear, and the talking was done by a lady and gentleman behind the screen. After the performance they came to the front and bowed to the audience, which, on Saturday afternoon mainly consisted of children, and each child was given either an orange or a bag of sweets on the way out" - letter from F.C.Woolfenden 72 09 06

1976 08 31

Plans for a nightclub in the former Rex Ballroom and Cinema at Magrath Avenue, Cambridge, have been scrapped after residents succeeded in opposing both a drinks licence and a music, singing and dancing licence for the club. Mr Gordon Cave wanted to open ‘The Carioca Club’ on the premises but faced violent objections from the police, the city council and residents who have for years protested about the noise and nuisance caused. Their complaints intensified when the ballroom was turned into a nightclub a few years ago and the cinema became a bingo hall 76 08 31

1977 01 15

The Central EMI Bingo and Social Club, a converted cinema in Hobson Street, Cambridge, could quite comfortably have found a place in the zaniest of science fiction movies – with its brash psychedelic mish-mash of colours and huge electrically operated board that rises high behind the caller. The four-year-old club has 10,000 members and is an addict’s paradise – open every afternoon and evening except Sunday and with hundreds of pounds at stake at each session. On Saturday the club linked up by phone to the EMI club in Oxford for a game which boasted a £400 jackpot. In the few seconds between games people dashed for the fruit machine which spills out its £30 jackpot in 50p pieces 77 01 15

1977 07 14

First film festival [6.1]

1979 02 02

The old Rex Cinema and ballroom in Magrath Avenue Cambridge which has been a source of controversy among nearby residents is now owned by Cambridgeshire County Council who paid £33,000 for it at auction. The building has been almost derelict since the Abbey Sports and Social Club closed in October 1973. The exact future of the site has yet to be decided but it will extend the present facilities at the Shire Hall 79 02 02

1980

1980 04 17

When the word first went out that a major feature film, 'Chariots of Fire' was seeking 150 undergraduates for a couple of day's filming in Cambridge the film-makers found themselves oversubscribed. But the response from other sections of the University was less enthusiastic. Gonville and Caius and Trinity College have refused to allow filming and several 'Cambridge' scenes are being shot at Eton 80 04 17 [6.2]

1982 01 20

Film fans need have no fears that Cambridge cinemas may be converted into Bingo halls. EMI, which owns the two-screen Victoria say they have plans to convert it into a triple. It is the largest in town and attracts an average audience of about 600 people. Seats are now £2.10 for adults but the manager rejects the idea it is too expensive. One of the long-term threats is the home video market 82 01 20

1982 03 12

Maurice Stevenson is Cambridge's longest-serving projectionist; he recently retired from the Victoria Cinema after showing films for 54 years. He started aged 14 at the old Tivoli Cinema in Chesterton Road, moved to the Central, then the Playhouse where he was chief projectionist at the age of 18. Later he was at the Regal. He has seen it all from the 'silent' days to the coming of 'talkies', then colour; from the advent of 3D and wide screen to stereophonic sound, from traditional projection methods to highly-developed technology. 82 03 12d

1982 06 01

The lights went up for the last time on the ABC Minors Matinee at the Victoria Cinema, Cambridge. The final credits brought to an end an institution which has won a place in the hearts of thousands of children. No more will Keith Kendall and his part-time cleaner colleagues sneak into the lavatories to catch some 12-year-olds having a crafty cigarette. Sid Perkiss, who has manned the box office, remembers when two or three hundred children packed the cinema. Now it has been killed by the one-eyed villain, television. 82 06 01

1983 02 20

There can be no doubt about the popularity of film libraries; they range from cinema classics to soft porn. Some shops have the cassettes on shelves behind the counter leaving the hirer to choose from catalogues, others kept the cases on open display. It costs about £1.50 to hire a film for 24 hours with a deposit of £30. It is usual to leave a signed cheque which is exchanged for the return of the film. But tapes only have a limited life; constant use results in 'stretching' and tape 'slap' caused by poor rewinding. 83 02 20

1983 03 15

The Central EMI Bingo and Social Club offers cash prizes all the way up to £1,000 on Saturday night. This is shared with three other clubs in Oxford, Wellingborough and Colchester. But winning comes second: its social function is undeniable. It is raucous but never resigned. "You get all classes here", said the highly-popular afternoon caller, Maggie Bennett. "You get a few who are a bit rough

and who you can tell by their clothes are playing with the family allowance. In the evening you get much younger people. Basic costs are an admission fee – pensioners may only 23 pence – and the buying of books of cards for each session – two books cost £1.70 - 83 03 15 p10

1983 12 05

A fire at the Victoria 1 cinema on Market Hill completely destroyed the screen and part of the stage, causing damage estimated at £50,000. There appears to have been a forced entry and it is being treated as arson. The cinema was showing 'War Games'. It is hoped to open the 139-seater Victoria 2 today 83 12 05 p [4.2]

1984 02 08

Cambridge's Victoria cinema reopened after the disastrous fire and is now one of the best-equipped in the country with new equipment, new seats and much-improved lavatories. It has six-track stereo, a new screen and the new 70mm projector is seen at full benefit in films like 'Ghandi' and 'The Star Wars' trilogy which will be brought back by popular demand. When the seven-hour programme was tried out last year it attracted a full house with people in fancy costume 84 02 08 p14

1984 09 06

A blaze swept through the ABC Regal cinema in St Andrew's Street, gutting the central part of the 730-seat auditorium. The recently-renewed screen melted with the heat and the rest was damaged. The Polyurethane seat and floor coverings caused a lot of smoke which penetrated the upstairs ABC2 cinema. It is believed to have been started by a cigarette end left smouldering by a cinema-goer. Last year the Victoria cinema was damaged by an arson attack 84 09 06 [4.3]

1985 03 26

The Kinema is no more. Like the Central Cinema it became a bingo hall. But at least it has not been pulled down to make room for a supermarket, like the Playhouse, nor turned into a warehouse like the Tivoli, nor demolished to become a car park like the Rex. Leslie Halliwell who was manager at the Kinema and Rex is now regarded as the country's leading cinema bluff. And in his new book 'Seats in All Parts' he has plenty to say about the way cinemas used to be run in Cambridge. 85 03 26c

1985 12 12

The old 100-year-old Kinema bingo hall in Mill Road, which is currently on the market for £170,000, may be restored and turned back into a cinema to meet the fast-growing demand for the showing of old-time and specialist films. The City Council, who owns most of the property nearby, think it could become a major tourist attraction helping to tempt visitors away from the city centre 85 12 12

1985 12 17

Cambridge's Victoria Cinema has been sold to make way for a new Marks and Spencer store. The prime market square site has housed the city's largest cinema since 1931 and underwent a major refurbishment following a fire two years ago. The sale will leave Cambridge with two other cinemas, the ABC 1 and ABC 2 complex and the Arts Cinema. But there are plans to change the old Kinema bingo hall in Mill Road back into a cinema 85 12 17 [4.4]

1985 12 27

The Kinema in Mill Road was built in 1882 when it was called the Theatre Royal. It was also known as Sturton Town Hall and Gladstone Liberal Club and staged shows until 1885. It was taken over by the Salvation Army who were ousted in 1910 then renamed the Empire, showing variety and pictures until 1916 before changing its name to the Kinema. It was badly supported and became a bingo hall. Now it may be restored as a cinema with a café, bookshop and entertainment complex. It is owned by the Sturton Town Hall Liberal Company, named after Joseph Sturton, a powerful Liberal who bought land in the area in 1897 and built houses for poor people. 85 12 27

1986 04 08

Plans for a super cinema complex on the site of the main Post Office sorting office in Mill Road could see six separate cinema units each capable of holding 300 people together with a massive cycle parking space. Thorn-EMI says they need more screens and the Victoria Cinema site is unsuitable for conversion. The Post Office, which is currently building a new sorting office on the Clifton Industrial Estate, already has permission for housing or the site might accommodate Technical College students. 86 04 08

1986 04 10

Cambridge City Council has abandoned its plans for the former Kinema in Mill Road. When the building closed as a bingo hall there were hopes it might be restored and reopened as an Edwardian music hall and become an out-of-centre tourist attraction. Others felt the site could be used for housing or demolished to allow the widening of Mill Road. Now a private entertainments company hope to reopen it as a specialist cinema. 86 04 10

1986 04 25

Tivoli - plan for entertainment centre rejected [5.18]

1987 01 26

Cambridge councillors have abandoned plans to buy the old Kinema cinema and bingo hall in Mill Road because repairing the century-old building would cost too much. It had been hoped to restore it to its former glory as a Victorian entertainments palace but a structural survey has revealed more than 40 major faults. Some of the walls bulge, the building needs a complete new roof and all the woodwork would have to be renewed. Now it might be demolished to widen the road. 87 01 26

1987 10 07

Arts Cinema consider move Festival site ¢CEN 7.10.87

1987 10 23

Victoria to close January ¢CEN 23.10.87

1988 01 15

Lights went up for the last time at the Victoria Cinema as the final performance of its last show came to an end. As the audience left after seeing 'Spaceballs' or 'Predator', manager Richard Wright reflected on the cinema's long history. Memories of MGM musicals, Saturday morning minors and all-night horror shows came flooding back. Mick Wells, who has been the chief projectionist for 24 years recalled the halcyon days when 'South Pacific' ran for two solid years and 'The Sound of Music' for three. Now the building on Cambridge Market Hill will make way for a new Marks and Spencer store. 88 01 15

1988 01 27

Victoria Cinema staff recall history – 88 01 27b

1988 04 30

The former Kinema music hall may be turned into a multi-million pound block of student accommodation. Sawston-based William Sindall has applied to build an 80-room scheme for CCAT but will wait until the college gains Polytechnic status in April 1989 before handing over the lease, avoiding Government restrictions. It comes as food news for the college which has seen its hopes of turning the former Owlstone Croft nurses' home into 200 flats dashed by a change in rules over lease-back schemes. Now residents will be consulted. 88 04 30

1988 06 16

Proposed cinema, Corn Exchange ¢CEN 16.6.88

1988 10 12

Corn Exchange to be regularly used as cinema ¢CEN 12.10.88

1988 11 03

Planning granted for £30M expansion Grafton Centre, including cinema øCEN 3.11.88

1988 12 15

The former Tivoli cinema building which opened on Chesterton Road in 1925 has been converted into 'The Exchange' with two large cocktail bars and a 120-seater restaurant. Later will come a basement gym, a punt landing stage and a roof garden restaurant with panoramic views over Jesus Green. Entertainment facilities include a huge electronic roll-down screen, the latest audio equipment and closed circuit television relaying film of the dance hall, But great care has been taken to preserve the distinctive atmosphere with plaster ceiling mouldings and a combination of rich dark and red wood 88 12 15a

1990 04 16

Giant multi-screen cinema may be built in heart of Cambridge as plans for cinema as part of the Grafton Centre – 90 04 16a

1990 05 08

Exchange Fitness Club, former Tivoli cinema for sale – 90 05 08a